

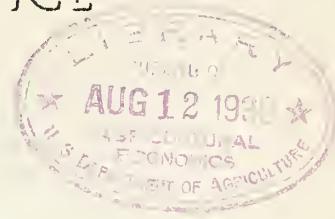
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SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE NEWS

REGION 4

COMPRISING STATES OF LOUISIANA, ARKANSAS,
OKLAHOMA AND TEXAS, EXCEPT HIGH PLAINS AREA



REGIONAL OFFICE--FORT WORTH, TEXAS

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NO. 7

DR. BENNETT VISITS ARKANSAS AND LOUISIANA

Chief Fills Four Speaking Engagements

Dr. H. H. Bennett, Chief of the Service, this month toured the states of Arkansas and Louisiana, making addresses at Ruston and Lafayette, Louisiana, and at Hope and Forrest City, Arkansas. It was the Chief's second visit to Region 4 this year.

His first stop was at Ruston on July 21 where he spoke to students enrolled in the summer conservation course being offered by Louisiana Polytechnic Institute.

There Dr. Bennett discussed the need for erosion control and the importance of getting conservation systems installed on agricultural land covering a wide area of the state. He also emphasized the opportunities that are available to teachers who want to assist in spreading knowledge of soil conservation. He pointed to the soil conservation districts program, now well under way in Louisiana, as the mechanism by which farmers themselves may obtain the wide-spread application of conservation practices.

On Saturday, July 22, Dr. Bennett discussed work in soil conservation districts with a number of district supervisors from units in the North Louisiana Area who assembled at the Minden Land Utilization project.

Sunday, July 23, Dr. Bennett traveled to Lafayette. Monday morning he spoke at Southwestern Louisiana Institute there. His talk dealt generally with the need for and the benefits to be expected from a soil and water conservation

program, but special emphasis was placed on the importance of soil conservation districts in obtaining wide-spread control of erosion on agricultural land. His audience at Southwestern was composed of students of agriculture, farmers and businessmen.

Tuesday, July 25, Dr. Bennett was the guest of honor at a soil conservation rally, field day and field tour at Hope, sponsored by the Mine Creek Soil Conservation District at Nashville, the Terre Rouge-Bodcaw District with headquarters at Hope, and other civic and agricultural groups.

Following a tour of conservation treated farms in the Hope project and camp demonstration areas visitors assembled at the Hope Camp for a free barbecue. Dr. Bennett spoke during the afternoon commanding Arkansas farmers for the excellent progress they have made in establishing districts and installing conservation practices on farms within operating districts.

Dr. Bennett conferred with state and area officials of the Service at Little Rock on Wednesday morning and left shortly after noon for Forrest City.

He was the guest of honor at the annual Crowley Ridge Peach Festival at Forrest City on Thursday, making three talks while there. He spoke to students, farmers and businessmen at the High School Thursday morning, discussing the districts program and stressing the importance of conservation to the orchardist. He also spoke at an official barbecue Thursday afternoon arranged by members of the Eastern Arkansas Young Businessmen's Club for festival guests. Dr. Bennett spoke briefly Thursday evening at the beauty pageant and crowned the festival queen.

On his tour of Louisiana and Arkansas, Dr. Bennett was accompanied by Louis P. Merrill, regional conservator; J. W. Sargent, associate regional conservator, joined the group in Arkansas.

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(Editor's Note: Excerpts from Dr. Bennett's talks will be printed in the August issue of Soil Conservation Service News.)

CONSERVATION SYSTEMS HELP INCREASE CROP YIELDS

Nine representative farmers residing near Waxahachie, Texas, have seen their per acre cotton yields steadily increase since they began conservation farming in 1936.

In 1935, before they began changing farming practices and land use, the per acre average lint cotton yield on these nine farms was 138.2 pounds. Since that time the per acre average lint cotton production has increased as follows: 167.6 pounds in 1936; 217.6 pounds in 1937, and 220.8 pounds in 1938. The yield in 1938 was approximately 60 per cent greater than in 1935.

The survey disclosing these increases was made by technicians of the Soil Conservation Service CCC Camp at Waxahachie from whom these farmers received assistance in establishing coordinated conservation systems on their land. The production reports were obtained from ginning records kept by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration there.

At the same time, yield reports were obtained for 22 adjacent farms on which coordinated conservation systems had not been established. The average per acre yields for these 22 farms were found to be: 119.6 pounds in 1935; 168.4 pounds in 1936; 187 pounds in 1937, and 169 pounds in 1938. The average yield in 1938 on these 22 farms was approximately 41.8 per cent greater than in 1935. Census reports have shown that there has been a gradual increase in per acre cotton yields since 1933.

"In selecting nine conservation farms on which these production surveys were made, no effort was made to choose farms with more favorable records," T. N. Winn, technician in charge at the Camp, said. "An effort was made to see that the conservation farms were in sections where the adjoining untreated farms were similar in soil type, degree of slope and original erosion classification."

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161 Districts Formed in 24 States

As of June 15, landowners in 24 states had created 161 soil conservation districts embracing a total of 88,436,148 acres. At that time, 113 districts in 23 states had entered into memoranda of understanding with the Department of Agriculture for the assistance of Soil Conservation Service technicians in the establishment of coordinated conservation measures on individual farms within the districts.

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PENETRATION TESTS SHOW VALUE OF FURROWS

The value of contour furrowing of pastures to retain greater amounts of moisture on the land and thereby aid grass growth was demonstrated at Dublin, Texas, last month when moisture penetration tests on farms in the Green Creek Demonstration area of the Soil Conservation Service revealed that rainfall penetrated the soil approximately a foot deeper on furrowed pastures than it did on untreated pastures.

O. J. Orton, project conservationist at Dublin said that tests made on four farms after the late June rains showed that the furrows caught and held much of the rain that fell and retained the water until it had time to soak into the soil, there to be stored as a reserve supply to aid grass growth.

Moisture penetrated to a depth of two feet, two inches on the furrowed pasture of L. M. McAdams while on pasture areas of the same farm, not contour furrowed, moisture penetrated to a depth of only 1 foot, 1 1/2 inches.

Similar tests on the S. G. Chambers farm showed the depth of moisture penetration to be 2 feet, 7 1/2 inches on the furrowed pasture and 1 foot, 4 1/2 inches on untreated areas.

On the Myrtis Robbins farm the moisture depth was 1 foot, 7 1/2 inches on the furrowed pasture while dry soil was encountered at 1 foot on similar pasture areas not furrowed.

Moisture penetrated to a depth of two feet, 6 inches on the B. V. Denman furrowed pasture and only one foot and 6 inches on the unfurrowed pasture.

Mr. Orton said that the tests on the four farms were made on pastures of the same soil type and slope, the only difference being that part of the areas on which the tests were made were furrowed and part were not.

Approximately 4,000 acres of pasture land in the Green Creek watershed have been treated to conserve moisture, either by contour ridges or furrows.

REPORT SHOWS RAPID PROGRESS IN ARKANSAS DISTRICTS

The number of acres under agreement in Arkansas districts has more than doubled in the past six months, according to a compilation of reports made by the district conservationists in the twelve operating Arkansas districts.

When the year 1939 began, agreements had been signed by 958 farmers who control 121,657 acres. On the first of July, there were 1,859 agreements covering 245,815 acres.

More than 574,000 acres in the twelve districts were covered by conservation surveys in the first six months of this year, bringing the total to 1,793,369 acres on which conservation surveys had been completed.

On July 1, farm plans were being developed for 160 farms having a total area of 23,461 acres. One hundred four farm plans had been completed at that time and were being held pending signature by the farm owners. These plans were for a total of 13,130 acres.

Fifty-six educational meetings were conducted in Arkansas districts last month, with a total attendance of 2,848 persons.

A certificate of organization has been issued to Fourche LaFave Petit Jean Soil Conservation District, the fourteenth district to be created in Arkansas. The appointed supervisors of this district are Donal Barger of Plainview, Arkansas, and James E. Word of Dardanelle, Arkansas. Fourche LaFave Petit Jean District covers approximately 630,280 acres in Yell County and in a part of Perry County.

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Three of the four states which make up Region 4 of the Service, have in operation 36 state soil conservation districts, six more than any other region in the United States.

A recent report shows that farmers in the states of Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana now have 36 operating soil conservation districts. Texas has only recently passed a state districts enabling law and as yet has no organized districts.

Oklahoma with sixteen operating districts leads the nation in the number of working districts, while Arkansas with twelve in operation, is second in the nation. Louisiana has eight operating districts.

PROGRESS IN DEMONSTRATION AREAS LISTED

More than 15,990 farmers owning or operating 2,559,443 acres in the work areas of Soil Conservation Service projects and camps of Region 4 in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas on May 31 had installed or were establishing complete and coordinated soil and water conservation systems on their land.

Conservation systems had been completely established on 7,604 of the 15,990 farms. Completed farms cover a land area of 1,103,725 acres.

The following table presents the progress made by states and by camps and projects:

Location	No. of Agree- ments	No. of farms completed	Acres in Agree- ments	Acres in completed farms
<u>Projects:</u>				
Arkansas	1,087	438	131,337	71,946
Louisiana	834	609	121,664	89,445
Texas	1,364	1,105	192,840	137,663
Oklahoma	1,745	862	237,936	80,842
<u>Project</u>				
Total	5,030	3,014	683,777	379,896
<u>Camps:</u>				
Arkansas	2,236	835	360,415	113,769
Louisiana	1,539	607	311,187	102,934
Texas	3,642	1,972	678,889	339,385
Oklahoma	3,543	1,176	525,175	167,719
<u>Camp</u>				
Total	10,960	4,590	1,875,656	723,807
<u>Project and Camp Total</u>				
15,990	7,604	2,559,443		1,103,703

SERVICE TAKES OVER DRAINAGE CAMPS

The five Civilian Conservation Corps drainage camps in Louisiana were transferred to the Soil Conservation Service, July 1.

The camps, situated at Abbeville, Ville Platte, Lafayette, Thibodaux and at Iowa, were under the supervision of the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering until their transfer.

The work program of the camps will not be altered. In cooperation with drainage districts or with the police juries of the parishes in which the camps are located, the camps are engaged in rehabilitation of existing drainage systems.

Enrollees clear and grub rights-of-way for large ditches, remove vegetation from existing ditches, hand slope banks of ditches so that heavy machinery may be used, and clean, straighten and deepen old ditches.

The enrollees at the camps at Abbeville, Lafayette and Thibodaux are junior whites. Those at Iowa are junior negroes and those at Ville Platte are negro veterans. The Western Gulf Coast region of the Soil Conservation Service now directs the work of 72 CCC Camps in Louisiana, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas.

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MORE THAN 2,000 NEW AGREEMENTS ADDED DURING YEAR

During the last fiscal year, Soil Conservation Service Projects and CCC Camps entered into 2,317 additional agreements covering a total of 416,598 acres.

Of these totals, the Camps accepted 2,183 agreements obligating assistance in establishing coordinated conservation systems on 402,061 acres. The projects entered into 129 agreements for work on 14,537 acres.

Plans on the 402,061 acres placed under agreement in the work areas of the camps call for changes in land use on 66,061 acres. Included in these changes in land use are: Conversions of cropland to pasture, 36,054 acres; cropland to woodland, 1,475 acres; cropland to permanent hay, 1,476

acres; pasture to woodland, 2,502 acres, and woodland to pasture, 12,979 acres.

Of the 14,537 acres placed under new agreements by the demonstration projects, land use changes are planned on 1,953 acres. Included in these changes in land use are: Conversions of cropland to pasture, 928 acres; cropland to permanent hay, 192 acres; cropland to woodland, 183 acres; pasture to woodland, 38 acres, and woodland to pasture, 262 acres.

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NEW OKLAHOMA DISTRICT GRANTED ASSISTANCE

The United States Department of Agriculture has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the supervisors of the Harper County State Soil Conservation District in Oklahoma.

Harper County District covers 661,120 acres, all lying within Harper County. It is the seventeenth Oklahoma district to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Agriculture for the assistance of Soil Conservation Service personnel in installing soil and water conservation practices on farms within the district.

Headquarters for the district are being established at Buffalo, Oklahoma.

As of July 1, the operating soil conservation districts in Oklahoma had entered into agreements with 632 farmers who control 108,837 acres. In addition, plans are being prepared for 209 farms covering 39,443 acres. Twenty-three farm plans have been completed for 3,457 acres and are pending signature by the owners.

Thirteen educational meetings were held in the districts in June, with a total attendance of 203 persons.

Conservation surveys, the first step in farm planning, have been completed on 930,416 acres in the districts.

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LOUISIANA DISTRICTS ENTER INTO MEMORANDA
OF UNDERSTANDING

Two additional Louisiana soil conservation districts last month entered into memoranda of understanding with the United States Department of Agriculture.

These districts are: Bogue Chitto-Pearl River, covering approximately 967,620 acres in Washington Parish and parts of St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and St. Helena Parishes; and Dugdemona, covering approximately 1,212,504 acres in parts of Lincoln, Bienville, Caldwell, Grant, LaSalle, Winn and Jackson Parishes. Headquarters of Bogue Chitto-Pearl River District have been established at Franklinton.

Six other Louisiana districts already had memoranda of understanding.

The Louisiana committee has announced the election of the following district directors:

Grand Coteau Ridge District: J. R. Barry, Grand Coteau; H. P. Dupre, Pine Prairie, and Earl Fontenot, Washington.

Lower East Red River District: R. E. Brown, Dry Prong; J. D. Guinn, Manifest, and A. G. Herring, Jena.

Calcasieu District: G. C. Conerly, Anacoco; A. A. Fuller, Merryville, and D. R. Thompson, DeRidder.

A recent report showed that 103 agreements, for a total of 21,470 acres, had been executed by farmers and the supervisors of Dorcheat, Upper Sabine, and Feliciana Soil Conservation Districts.

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